

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-14

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SUBJ: DIET IN HOME STRETCH EXPECTED TO PASS KEY BILLS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: TOKYO 12047

SUMMARY: AS DIET ENTERED FINAL WEEK OF TWICE-EXTENDED MARATHON SESSION WHICH BEGAN LAST DECEMBER. GOJ APPEARED LIKELY THIS WEEKEND TO

ACHIEVE PASSAGE OF TWO CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATIVE PACKAGES RELATED TO DEFENSE AND HIGHER EDUCATION OVERRIDING LAST DITCH OPPOSITION EFFORTS TO ABORT THEM. SUCCESSFUL ENACTMENT OF KEY LEGISLATION SOMEWHAT ENHANCES OTHERWISE UNIMPRESSIVE LEGISLATIVE RECORD FOR TANAKA GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

1. WITH ONLY FIVE DAYS REMAINING IN RECORD-BREAKING 280-DAY DIET SESSION WHICH BEGAN LAST DECEMBER, TANAKA GOVERNMENT AND RULING LDP APPEARS TO HAVE WON ITS LONG STRUGGLE TO

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ACHIEVE PASSAGE OF LAST KEY ITEMS ON ITS

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA DESPITE DESPERATE LAST DITCH
RESISTANCE BY MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTIES. AFTER
ACHIEVING COMPROMISE OVER LONG-DEBATED NATIONAL
RAILWAYS FARE RAISE AND GOVERNMENT HEALTH INSURANCE
PENSION BILLS WHICH ENACTED INTO LAW EARLIER THIS
WEEK (REFTEL), GOJ/LDP AND OPPOSITION MOVED INTO
SHARP CONFRONTATION OVER REMAINING KEY GOJ
LEGISLATIVE ITEMS, INCLUDING BILL TO RAISE JSDF
FORCE LEVELS AND BILL TO ESTABLISH NEW NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY AT TSUKUBA NEAR TOKYO. DECISION
SEPTEMBER 20 OF UPPER HOUSE PRESIDENT
KENZO KONO TO CUT SHORT COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS
AND SUBMIT PENDING BILLS TO PLENARY SESSION FOR FINAL
VOTE BEFORE DIET EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 27, VIRTUALLY
ASSURES THEIR PASSAGE THIS SESSION.

2. PRESIDENT KONO'S DECISION CAME AFTER HIS
EARLIER EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE COMPROMISE AGREEMENT
BETWEEN GOJ/LDP AND OPPOSITION PARTIES FAILED.
WITH DSP REMAINING ON SIDELINES, THREE MAJOR
OPPOSITION PARTIES--JSP, KOMEITO, JCP--DECIDED
TO CONTINUE THEIR OPPOSITION TO BILLS BY SUBMITTING
SERIES OF NON-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS IN LOWER HOUSE
AGAINST DEFENSE AGENCY DIRGEN SADANORI YAMANAKA,
EDUCATION MINISTER SEISUKE OKUNO, AND ENTIRE
TANAKA CABINET. THIS MANEUVER HAS EFFECT OF
TEMPORARILY DELAYING ACTION ON CONTROVERSIAL
LEGISLATION SINCE UPPER HOUSE PLENARY CANNOT
BE HELD UNTIL CENSURE ACTIONS WHICH HAVE PARLIAMENTARY
PRIORITY ARE COMPLETED IN LOWER HOUSE. LDP MAJORITY
IN LOWER HOUSE HANDILY VOTED DOWN CENSURE MOTIONS
AGAINST YAMANAKA AND OKUNO ON FRIDAY AND IS
EXPECTED TO DISPOSE OF ACTION AGAINST CABINET
AS WHOLE AT SATURDAY AFTERNOON PLENARY. THIS IS
EXPECTED TO CLEAR WAY FOR FINAL UPPER HOUSE
ACTION ON DEFENSE AND UNIVERSITY BILLS EITHER
SATURDAY EVENING OR SUNDAY.

3. FACT THAT TANAKA GOVERNMENT'S KEY BILLS WERE
NOT PASSED UNTIL LAST TEN DAYS OF TWICE-
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EXTENDED SESSION AND FACT THAT OTHER IMPORTANT
GOJ LEGISLATION FAILED EVEN TO WIN PLACE ON
DOCKET MAKES FOR GENERALLY UNIMPRESSIVE
LEGISLATIVE RECORD FOR TANAKA ADMINISTRATION,
WHICH MANAGED TO ENACT ONLY ABOUT 88 OUT OF 123 BILLS
IN LEGISLATIVE HOPPER THIS SESSION. NEVERTHELESS,
PASSGE OF KEY LEGISLATION ON WHICH SO MUCH
GOJ PRESTIGE HAD BEEN STAKED HAS PROBABLY

CONTRIBUTED IMPORTANTLY TO ENHANCING IMAGE
AND BOLSTERING MORALE OF BOTH GOVERNMENT
AND LDP.
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